

# Livonia, C'ville consider merger

Should the Livonia and adjacent Clarenceville school district be merged to save operating costs?

One Livonia school board thinks so and wants a joint meeting of school officials to at least explore the idea. Thomas Davis, Livonia board member who is also its finance committee, raised the issue Monday night at the end of a business meeting agenda and urged that the idea be considered.

He said that in view of "pressing financial needs of school districts, Livonia must do everything it can to contain costs and improve efficiency." One problem involved in the money issue is the impact of student enrollment decreases and its resulting loss of state aid.

"A logical starting point" in the move to look for new ways to save money is the possible consolidation of Livonia and Clarenceville, Davis said. Clarenceville has students from Livonia, Farmington Hills and Redford Township.

THE IDEA has been raised by The Observer in the past three Clarenceville school board elections when candidates up for reelection or challengers were asked about the possibility of a merger.

Incumbents and challengers alike were in agreement that Clarenceville should continue as an independent school district.

Clarenceville is about one-tenth the size—financially and from an enrollment viewpoint—of the Livonia district. Livonia had just under 31,000 students in the past school year, while Clarenceville enrolled about 3,069. Li-

via has a budget of \$48 million, while Clarenceville spends about \$4.8 million.

Livonia operated last year 30 elementary schools, 10 junior highs and four senior highs, although two elementary will be closed next fall. Clarenceville has three elementary, one junior and one senior high. It also has a declining enrollment which has been the same as Livonia's on a percentage basis.

**NORMAN HUNT**, Clarenceville board president, said his district is opposed to the concept of merging with Livonia.

He said the idea was raised by Livonia about five years ago and was opposed by the smaller district at that time.

Hunt, a Farmington Hills resident, admitted that declining enrollment is a problem but felt that it's only a phase and that it will "reverse itself" in the near future.

He said that public improvements are being installed in the Farmington Hills part of the district and that development would take place and result in more families and school-age children.

"There is no support at this time" of the merger concept by Clarenceville, Hunt said.

**DAVIS SAID** there would be several advantages, in his view, of a merger of the two districts. There would be improved administrative efficiency by having a larger unit to deal with and it would provide obvious improved control factors, he said.

A larger district would have the ability to provide more and a greater variety of support services, he added.

"A larger district should be able to provide a broader program for all its students, for there may be some efficiency and improvement in the logic of the use of school buildings in the larger consolidated area," he continued.

The board member said that "it would seem that in a time of shrinking revenues and declining enroll-

ments, it would be well for this district (Livonia) to pursue every possibility and avenue to improve its efficiency and control its expenses.

"The Livonia board's finance committee advocated that it have preliminary discussions at the board level with Clarenceville, and that a joint study committee be formed, which could involve initially representatives of the two school boards, administrative staffs, and at some future date community leaders and employee associations from both districts."

## Woodbrooke drowns Forest Hills in swim meet

Paced by victories in five out of six relays and a clean sweep in the girls' 8-and-under bracket, Farmington's Woodbrooke Hills upset its Northwest Suburban Swim League mark to 2-0, disposing of Forest Hills 299-270.

Double winners for the Farmington-based club included Cheryl Richards and Debbie Houser, Richards, swimming in the 13-14-year old girls' division, recorded a 1:17.9 in the 100-meter individual medley and a 33.6 in the 50-meter butterfly. Houser, also swimming in the 13-14-year old ranks posted a 41.36 in the 50-meter breaststroke and a 30.6 in the 50-meter freestyle for a pair of blue ribbons.

In the boys' division, Chris Leslie turned in a 37.79 in the 9-10 year old 50-meter butterfly and a 41.8 in the 50-meter backstroke. In the 15-17-year-old boys' bracket, Todd Knock posted

a 32.14 in the 50-meter backstroke and a 28.7 in the 50-meter butterfly, good enough for a pair of firsts.

Clay Scowcroft swam in the 15-17 year-old division and turned in a 9.8 performance in the 100-meter freestyle and a 1:10.5 in the 100-meter individual medley.

**WOODBROOKE** Hills youngest girls took a clean sweep of all their events behind Kathy Leslie, recording a 23.07 in the 25-meter backstroke; Jennifer Rowe, posting a 19.44 in the 25-meter freestyle; Heidi Gasser who took the 25-meter butterfly with a time of 22.8 and Molly Morawski who took first place with a 25.6 clocking in the 25-meter breaststroke.

Thursday, Woodbrooke swimmers will seek their third consecutive victory of the new campaign when they face Beverly Hills.



### Happy fifth birthday

Birthdays are special and the 10 stores of Farmington's Village Mall are determined to celebrate their fifth year in a fitting manner. Lucy Vance of Lucy's Oldies but Goodies, (left) Eileen Boehler of Focal Point studios and Joyce Rummel of the Art Aloove kick off the festivities by cutting the cake. Free cake and coffee will be handed out until June 30 at the mall.

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## Wedding guest dies in 2-car collision

A Cincinnati resident visiting Farmington Hills for the wedding of her nephew died in an auto crash on her way from the festivities, early in the morning of June 19.

Virginia Ann Mason, 41 was in the front passenger seat beside her daughter, Susan, 18, when their '74 Oldsmobile was hit on the passenger side by a '72 Cadillac in the Fourteen Mile, Farmington Road intersection.

The driver of the Oldsmobile had stopped on southbound Farmington Road, and was driving into the intersection when the car was struck by the Cadillac, which was moving east-

bound on Fourteen Mile, according to Farmington Hills police.

Mrs. Mason was alive at the scene but died shortly afterward in Botsford Hospital. Miss Mason was treated at the hospital for minor injuries.

**DR. HERBERT** Gardner, 41, and his wife Margot, 41, of Huntington Woods, were in the second car. They were on their way home from a party at the Lion's Club, according to police.

Mrs. Gardner was treated for a bump on the head. Gardner was slightly injured, according to police. The accident is under investigation, according to the police.

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